

PLAIN TALKS

June 1990

Volume 69 Number 4

Japan says: "Hello, Dolly!"



New program
in hot water

Help drive
a million miles

A rescue at
Sabine Station

PLAIN TALKS

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8



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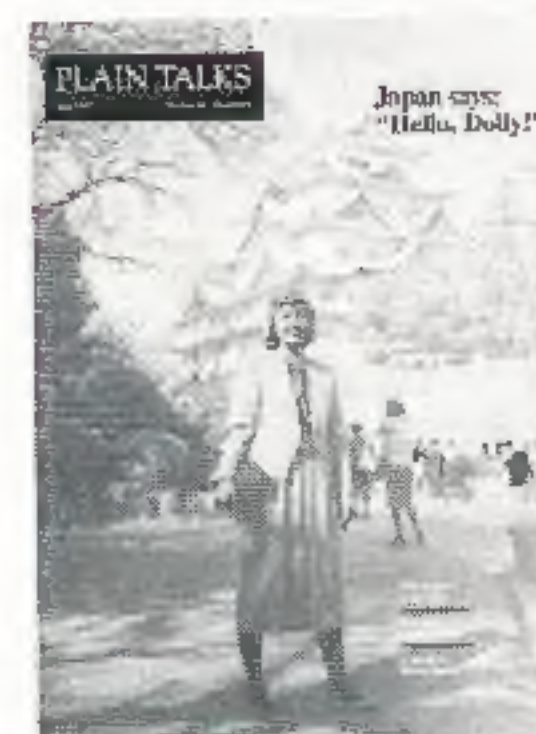
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About the cover

Dolly Johnson stands near cherry blossoms outside Nagoya Castle in Nagoya, Japan, on a recent visit sponsored by the Japanese Economic Foundation. (Pages 8-9)



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Vehicle safety program

“Million Mile Club” shares the savings



“We want to encourage teamwork among employees and to have them thinking vehicle safety ...,” says Durham.

story by Mark Viguet
photo by Scott Harper

Drive a million miles. Safely. That's the goal of Gulf States' new “Million Mile Club” vehicle safety program announced April 1 and continuing through 1991.

“In 1989, for the first time in many years, the company exceeded the goal we had set for chargeable (avoidable), on-the-job vehicle accidents,” says Mike Durham, manager-occupational health and safety. “Since employees company-wide drive about 16 million miles a year, we knew it was time to take action. We want to encourage teamwork among employees and to have them thinking vehicle safety as an essential part of their day.”

In 1987, GSU employees were involved in 41 avoidable, on-the-job vehicle accidents — one of the safest years on record.

In 1988 and 1989, however, these accidents rose to 49 and 67, respectively.

“Driving is serious business,” Durham says. “Nationally, vehicle accidents account for about 35 percent of fatal on-the-job accidents, and more than 50 percent of all fatal accidents, on- or off-the-job.”

The “Million Mile Club” is designed to reward work groups which drive a million miles without an avoidable, on-the-job vehicle accident. A group reaching the

million mile goal becomes a member of the club, earning a certificate to display and prizes for some employees in the group.

“When a group reaches the million-mile mark safely, on average they've saved the company \$6,000,” Durham explains. “We then return \$3,000 to the work group in prizes that will be distributed in a random drawing.”

At each additional million-miles driven safely, similar drawings will take place — but with more prizes.

“At 2 million miles, \$4,000 worth of prizes will be awarded, and at 3 million miles, \$5,000,” Durham says.

“We decided on work groups so that driving 1 million miles safely would be a reasonable goal, attainable in a reasonable amount of time, in less than a year,” Durham says. The groups are all power plants plus production support, Baton Rouge Division, Beaumont Division, Western Division, Lake Charles Division and the Port Arthur Division combined with Edison Plaza.

Each major vehicle location will display a gauge at its entrance to monitor progress toward membership in the “Million Mile Club.”

The new vehicle campaign is a part of the overall safety effort,

“Just Say Yes ... To Safety,” which is designed to put employees in a “safe” frame of mind. GSU Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer Linn Draper helped kick off the campaign with a letter to employees in early April.

“The overall safety effort has its own incentives in the form of prize drawings, separate from the ‘Million Mile Club,’ ” Durham says.

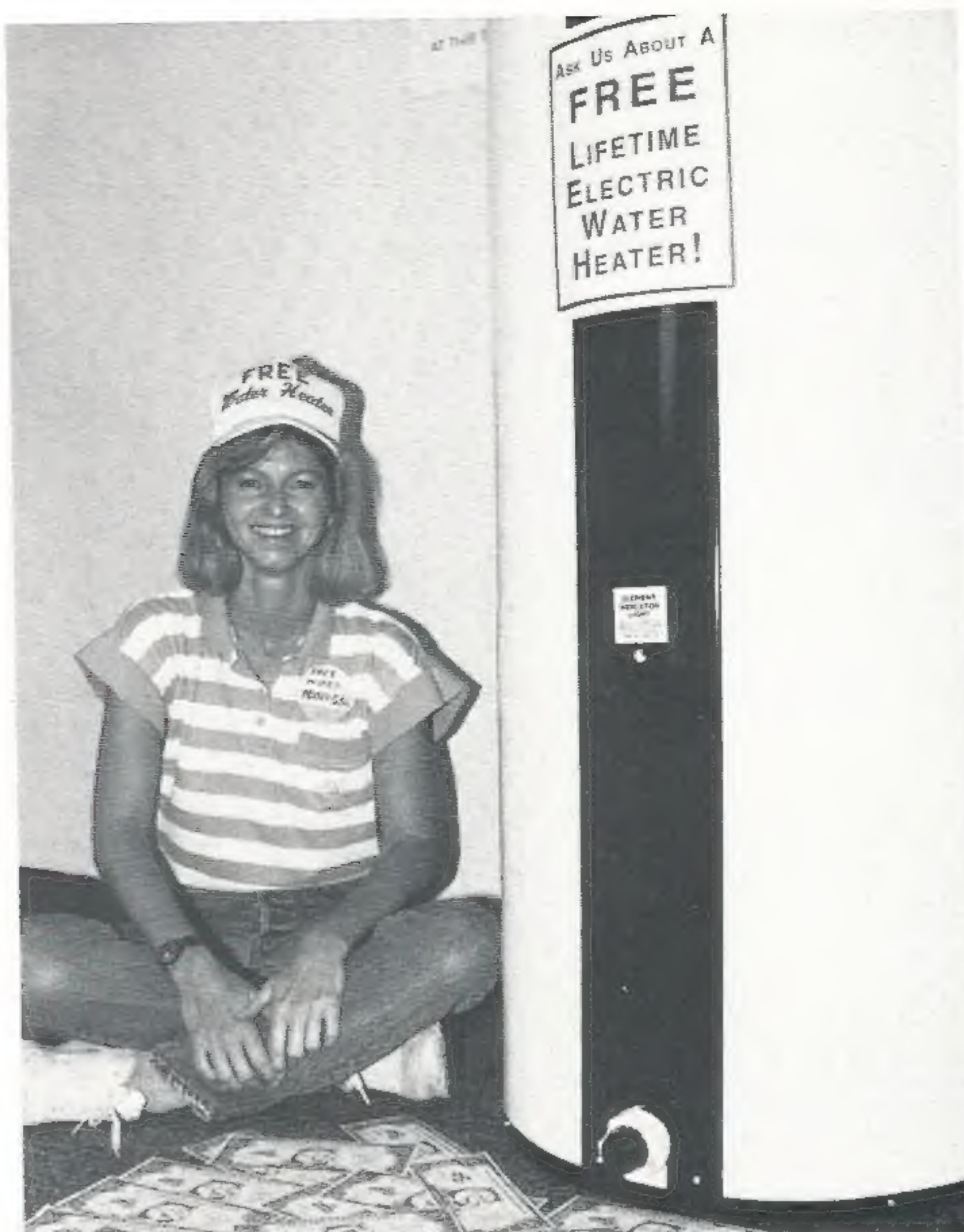
“Each month, all employees in the divisions and power plants, grouped geographically, will be eligible for prize drawings — if they have not had an on-the-job injury requiring medical treatment or avoidable vehicle accident the previous month.”

The “Just Say Yes ... To Safety” drawings have already begun and will continue through December. At year's end, several grand prizes will be awarded to winners in a drawing from among all employees who have not had a bodily injury or vehicle accident from April 1 through the end of the year.

“Being safety-minded helps everyone — the company, employees, everyone around us,” Durham says. “Since the company saves money with every accident that's avoided, these incentive programs are a way to share the savings with employees.”

Water heater program

Customer response exceeds expectations



Karen Baker, Silsbee collector, jumped on the promotion bandwagon by designing her own cap and button. Each water heater changeout is worth \$25 in Reddy Bucks.

story by Mike Rodgers
photos by Scott Harper

"The most successful program I've ever seen!"

"The word of mouth on this is incredible!"

"The public response is very good!"

No, the above comments from GSU employees have nothing to do with reaction to the television series "Twin Peaks." Instead, they reflect the rising enthusiasm over an innovative marketing program which is boosting GSU's sales and offering something special to customers — at no cost to them — a very energy-efficient water heater with a lifetime warranty.

"We're unique as an electric utility to offer our customers this advantage, so other utilities are keeping an eye on what we're doing," says Dale Peddy, marketing agent, Beaumont. Although the natural gas industry continues

to give away water heaters as an incentive, gas utilities do not have the advantage of giving out units with a lifetime tank and parts warranty.

There are some restrictions. Eligible residential customers must own a home with a gas water heater serviced by a competing utility. Once a customer selects an electric water heater, GSU will provide the unit at no charge. The water heater, manufactured by the Rheem Corporation, features a nonmetallic tank and comes with an insulation rating of R-25, the best available.

Beaumont and Port Arthur marketing inaugurated the program at the end of February, not anticipating the tremendous customer interest. Peddy notes with amusement that they ordered 60 units from the distributor, believing that to be sufficient for

the year. "We provided customers with 815 in the first three months," he says. These figures represent a good potential for increased sales on the GSU system, particularly with the long service life of the water heaters. The payback on the company's investment is about 1-1/2 years, which will benefit all customers and shareholders.

In Lake Charles, Annette Reeves, customer information coordinator, says they issued 79 customer vouchers in seven working days. "We kicked the program off May 1 and it caught on like wildfire." Reeves believes that, while many customers are intrigued by getting something like this from GSU, there's another attraction. "They feel better served with an electric water heater."

Gene Koci, district superinten-



Left, Brian Langston, Silsbee senior district service representative, loads another water heater. Above, "Our employees have done a super job with this promotion," says Peddy.

dent-Woodville, has a backlog of 150 customers waiting for water heaters to arrive. The incentive program there is providing a boost to the sagging local economy. "Plumbers are telling people about it. They get an installation fee from the customers every time they do a conversion."

"Shellshocked," is how Vic Enmon, marketing agent-Port Arthur, describes his reaction to customer interest. Enmon tells of one customer who bought a gas water heater just last year, but wants to convert to an electric water heater as soon as possible. Port Arthur employees collected about 130 referrals in three weeks. Enmon emphasizes to customers that they will be receiving the most energy-efficient water heater currently on the market.

In Silsbee, Robert Sheffield, district superintendent, tells a

similar success story. "It's going very well. We've put out over 100 water heaters so far and have a lot more customers waiting." He also credits a part of the success to the service factor associated with electric water heaters.

Rocky Haney jokes that he may have to hire someone to load water heaters on a truck to keep up with the demand. Haney, marketing coordinator-Conroe, says that after a later start than Beaumont, Western Division provided 75 water heaters in a month to interested customers. By midsummer, Haney predicts the demand will soar. "We provided a unit to one customer and got calls from two of her neighbors right away."

Peddy, Reeves, Koci, Enmon, Sheffield and Haney all credit GSU employees for the overwhelming reception. GSU plans

no formal advertising campaign, leaving everything to word of mouth by employees, plumbers and customers. In several locations, customer accounting personnel posted signs reading "Ask me about a free water heater." Eager customers are telling their friends, who are in turn phoning local offices to inquire. "The Reddy Referrals program spurred many employees to make a strong push," says Peddy, who concludes, "They really are doing a wonderful job." This is one of those situations where everyone benefits. Customers receive a free, energy-efficient water heater with a lifetime warranty and GSU gets the additional sales. A water heater uses electricity steadily without a huge seasonal peak, providing the company with high-quality sales.

Training for tight spots

On March 29, the Emergency Response Team at Sabine Station had a complete training exercise on confined structural rescue. **Plain Talks** editor Scott Harper was on hand to photograph the exercise from beginning to end.

Mike McQueen, equipment operator and team director, says this exercise focused on the less-publicized aspect of structural rescue. "Most people think we just climb up and down ropes and rappel down buildings," says McQueen. "Structural rescue also involves going into tight, confined areas to reach injured employees."

Following is a photograph feature of the training exercise.



1. James Braus climbs up to the water box extraction where victim Mark Prince is confined.



2. Braus enters through small opening, the only way in.



3. Once inside, Braus assesses the injuries and advises that Air Rescue be contacted.



4. Outside, John Weakley confers with team members about rope anchor points.



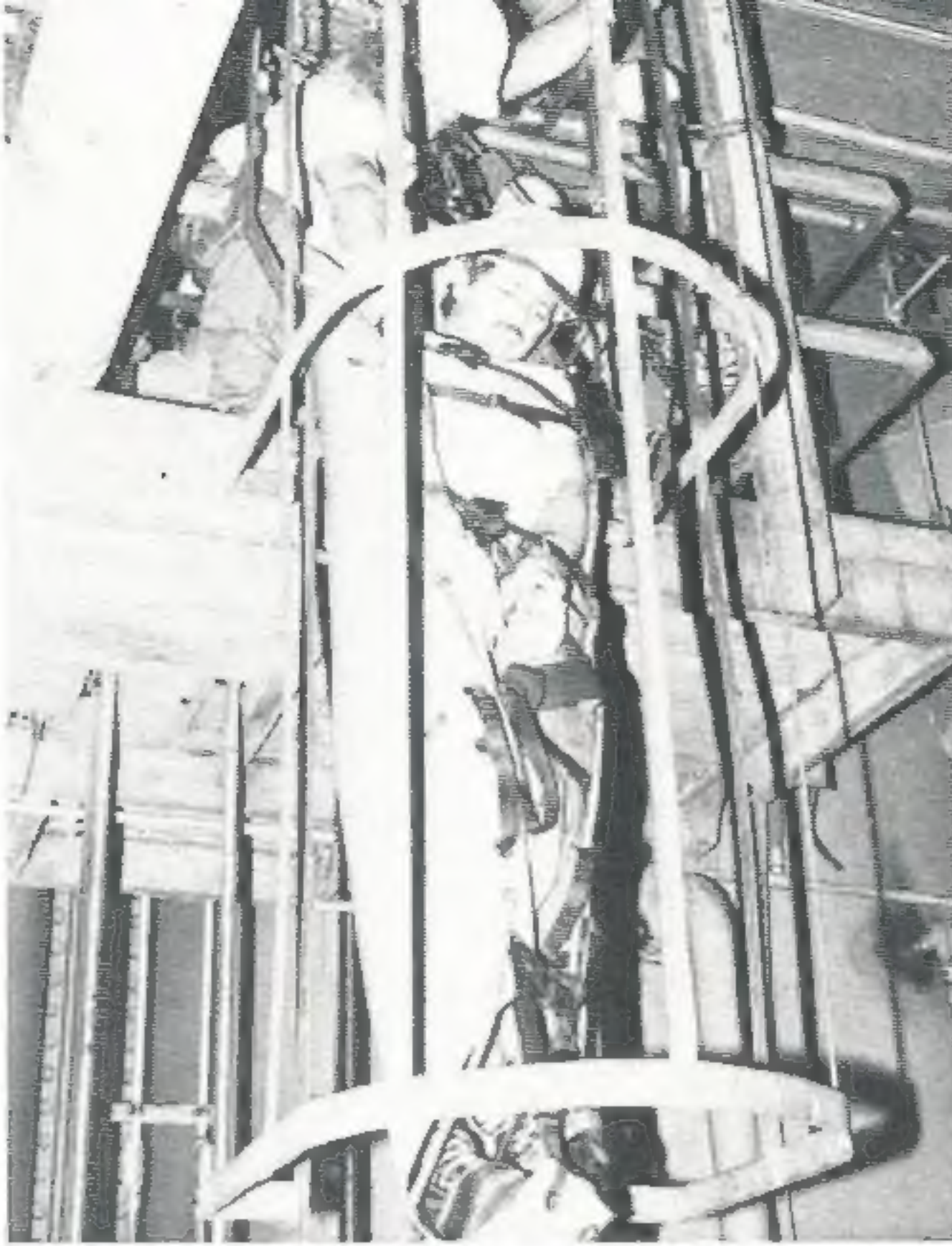
5. L to R, Team Director Mike McQueen and Brad Freeman monitor the training.



6. L to R, Gerald Waldrep and Mike Freeman make final preparations before moving the victim.



7. James Broom joins Braus in the confined area where they secure Prince for transport.



8. Prince is safely lowered to the ground in the sked stretcher.



9. Team members carry Prince to the first aid van.



10. Enroute to the helipad, Braus records Prince's vital signs.



11. On an overcast day, Air Rescue spots Sabine Station.



12. Thomas Weir signals Air Rescue for landing.



13. On the ground, Pilot Larry Gore has the response team and victim in view.



14. Flight Nurse Ray Peregrino (L, kneeling) and Flight Nurse Nancy Robinson (C, kneeling) attend to Prince.



15. The training exercise ends when Prince is loaded safely onto Air Rescue.

Johnson meets Japanese market face to face



During one of Johnson's weekend sightseeing tours, she viewed the Tachiki Kannon Temple in Nikko, which was quite a sight covered in snow.

by Susan Gilley

Japan may be noted for its stunning beauty, but hardly any sightseeing was on the itinerary when GSU's Dolly Johnson visited the island country in March.

Johnson, Gulf States' administrator of economic development, spent three weeks in Japan at the expense of the Japan Economic Foundation (JEF), studying the intricacies of Japanese business, finance and politics.

Although Johnson is based in Beaumont, she is responsible for economic development activities throughout GSU's two-state service area.

During her visit to Japan, Johnson reports she "became enthused about the possibility of attracting Japanese investment" to GSU's service area. "It won't be easy or quick," she admits, "but we've begun to open some doors."

The foundation selected Johnson as one of only five Americans participating in the

intensive session, which began March 8. She was nominated by the Japan External Trade Organization as the representative from the southeastern United States. Johnson says she gained an understanding of Japan's economy, political system and society. The ultimate goal, she notes, was to improve relations between Japan and other nations. Other participants in the ninth annual educational tour were from Italy, France, England, Australia and Canada.

Johnson says the group met with top Japanese business and government leaders and visited with plant managers. Such contacts, she says, "were invaluable in learning how the Japanese work." She says she can put the knowledge to work in marketing the service area to Japanese companies expanding their operations into the United States.

According to a JEF brochure, the foundation was established

"in recognition of the urgent need to promote better communications. It is entrusted with carrying out collective, unified activities to promote understanding abroad of the actual state of Japan's economy, industry and trade in machine goods, and to explain Japanese trade policies."

While Johnson feels honored that the JEF selected her for this year's study program, she believes GSU Team Cities and customers will benefit from the trip as well. "Establishing a relationship with Japanese business is a very long-term process, and this is a step in developing that relationship," she says. "From our economic development commitment to bring in jobs to our service area, we feel that it's important to make that connection. Japanese businesses already operate in the United States and will continue to establish new plants here. If we don't show our



interest in attracting foreign investments—and the new jobs from those investments—our service area will simply not be considered.”

GSU already had an ongoing effort aimed at luring Japanese business. For instance, the utility company printed a Japanese language brochure describing Southeast Texas and South Louisiana. It was distributed to Japanese companies, as well as through the state of Texas’ Japanese office, which opened last fall.

Johnson did not have much free time during the trip, because participants had to take part in all planned activities. During the day, she attended seminars with lectures and discussion on the Japanese economy, business, international finance, the Japanese market, Japanese politics, industrial relations in Japan, the restructuring of Japanese industry, their decision-making system and education. In the evenings, the

visitors dined with Japanese business leaders, participated in group discussions and took part in other arranged activities. Sightseeing was limited to Sunday excursions to Japanese temples and cultural attractions.

The group also studied specific industries during their stay, including telecommunications, automobile manufacturing and electronics and appliances. Visits were made to several cities, including Tokyo, Nikko, Kyoto, Nagoya and Toba.

But Johnson’s commitment to JEF did not end the instant she stepped back onto U.S. ground. Each participant had to write a report immediately after the session and another, more comprehensive report within two months.

“Besides absorbing information about Japan, we have a chance to share our thoughts about our countries’ policies and business practices. This



Top left, Johnson enjoys shabu-shabu, a traditional Japanese beef dish, at a seven-course dinner. Top right, Participants gathered with JEF sponsors in front of Matsushita Electric Industrial Company, the Japanese maker of Panasonic. Above, Takehiko Yokoseki, a Matsushita official, discusses potential investments in the U.S. with Johnson at a luncheon at Matsushita.

was a truly intercultural exchange,” adds Johnson.

Calvert opens new facility



The new Calvert District office houses the accounting, line, service and meter departments.

story by Scott Harper
photos by Connie Calfee

Driving into Calvert, you can't help but notice a new rustic building bearing the name "Gulf States Utilities." It's the new home for the Calvert district in Western Division. "It's the first new facility on the outskirts of town," says John Adams, district superintendent, Calvert. "It puts a shine on Calvert."

The 1,800-square foot facility features the latest in security systems and includes a drive-through window. All departments

(accounting, line, service and meters) are now located in the same building.

On March 15, the Calvert District held its Grand Opening Ceremony. For most of the day, the building was open for tours and refreshments were served. Louie the Lightning Bug was on hand to greet the children and bucket rides were provided. At 11:30, a short ribbon-cutting ceremony began with brief presentations from Dr. Linn

Draper, GSU chairman and CEO, and Cooper Wiese, Calvert mayor.

"It was a huge success," says Adams. "We had about 325 people come through the office." In addition to the Calvert High School band performing, the entire elementary school came in staggered bus loads to tour the facility.

According to Adams, the Calvert District was long overdue for a new building. "Our previous building had outlived its useful life as an office many years ago," says Adams.

The building has had a positive effect on the employees and the community. "It makes it a pleasure to get up and go to work," laughs Adams. "Employee morale and pride are at an all-time high."

Calvert is known for its antique shops and mystique. Gulf States kept the antique theme in mind when designing the building. "We have an ultramodern building that still has an antique feel to it," says Adams. "We decorated the inside with antiques."

Adams concludes, "The community is pleased. This new building speaks very highly of Gulf States."



Left to right, Calvert Mayor Cooper Wiese, Dr. Draper, John Adams and other community officials at the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

SERVICE ANNIVERSARIES

April

1990

30 YEARS

K. E. McCullough
Plant Production
Louisiana Station
M. E. Tillery Jr.
Marketing
Beaumont

20 YEARS

Douglas E. Martin
Electric T&D
Conroe
William E. Noble
Electric T&D
Baton Rouge
William S. Edwards Jr.
Electric T&D
Beaumont
James C. Goodwin
Plant Production
Willow Glen

Theda G. Allison
Division Accounting
Lake Charles
Carol B. White
Engineering
Beaumont

10 YEARS

Larry G. Holland
Plant Production
Nelson Coal
Kim A. Gallet
Electric T&D
Maurice
Robin H. Stutes
Division Accounting
Sulphur
Nancy S. Jones
Computer Applications
Beaumont
Ricky Gonzales
Electric T&D
Orange
Randy D. Fox
Electric T&D
Beaumont

Peggy M. Stewart
Plant Production
Willow Glen
Daniel M. Dunetz
Plant Production
Willow Glen
Joseph B. Hegwood
Accounting Services
Beaumont
Dane J. Mouton
Electric T&D
Lake Charles
Gloria D. Riggs
Division Accounting
Beaumont
Raymond L. Saunders
Electric T&D
Orange
Linda L. Howard
Division Accounting
Anahuac
Charles D. Bennefield
Plant Production
Nelson Coal
Michael W. Goudeau
Plant Production
Willow Glen
Michael G. Krebs
Electric T&D
Groveton
Kirk A. Leger
Plant Production
Nelson Station

Scott Harper



The Port Arthur Sideliners recently met at the SPARC Club at Sabine Station for lunch and special entertainment. In addition to some good home-cooked dishes, retirees were treated to an exhibition of square dancing and round dancing. One part of the show included involving volunteers from the audience in the dancing. Right, Caller Gene Bearson was able to persuade a few Sideliners to "swing their partner round and round!"

Koci receives development award

Scott Harper



Loughmiller and Koci.

Gene Koci, district superintendent-Woodville, received the company's "Community Developer of the Year" award for 1989. Arden Loughmiller, Beaumont Division vice president, presented the award to Koci during the recent Leadership Conference held in Beaumont.

A 31-year veteran with the com-

pany, Koci is the fifth recipient of the award that is given annually to the GSU employee who is judged to have contributed the most to the economic growth of his or her community. Judging is done by chamber of commerce executives from throughout GSU's service area.

Koci has helped coordinate the City of Woodville's Team City effort for the past two years, is chairman of the Tyler County Chamber of Commerce's industrial committee, and is involved in numerous other local economic development efforts.

LHEA recognizes Gulf States' home economics support



GSU home economists: (standing, l to r) Janice Wynn, Shivaun Davis, Marlene Brandt. (Sitting, l to r) Pris Gallagher, Harriet Babin Miller (with award), and Karen Yates.

Gulf States recently received the Friends of Home Economics Award for the South Central District of the Louisiana Home Economics Association (LHEA). The award recognizes support of home economics as a profession, and of the individuals who work as home economists.

GSU has a history of lending

support for the home economics professions through various company programs and services. The company has always been a strong supporter of LHEA, the American Home Economics Association (AHEA) and other district activities.

Gulf States is an active supporter of home economics programs at the

academic level. GSU home economists present programs at universities, junior high and high schools, and sponsor workshops for teachers.

The company has employed over 50 home economists over the past 30 years.



The GSU "Big 10" Bowling League in Beaumont Division presented awards for the 1989-90 season at an awards banquet held at the Neches Station Assembly Hall in May. Alfred Pierson, mechanical maintenance foreman, Neches Station, is a member of the bowling team receiving the 1st-place award. "Even though the league is made up primarily of Gulf Staters, anyone can bowl in the league," says Pierson. Pierson also received the award for "Men's High Game." Receiving their awards at the banquet are: (back, l to r) Pierson, Ronnie Chesson, Clem Chesson; (front, l to r) Kay Pierson, Linda Bernard, Don Bernard.



The Reddy Rhythms in concert at Edison Plaza.

Sharing time and talent

"Please accept my sincere thanks for the fun-filled program presented for our residents," writes Lyndall Harvey, activities director, Hotel Beaumont, to The Reddy Rhythms, Beaumont. "It was great!"

"We are truly fortunate to have a group such as you share your time and talent with us. Again thanks for making the lives of those living at Hotel Beaumont a bit more pleasant."

The Reddy Rhythms are a volunteer choir made up of employees located in Beaumont.

Kind and understanding

Baton Rouge customer Bess A. Porter writes to thank GSU for bill assistance:

"Thank you so much for your kind and helpful courtesy and patience with me and my bill payments. You couldn't know how you and COA (Council on Aging) have really been a life-saver to me. I shall never forget this. God Bless all of you who have been so kind and understanding."

Truly professional

Sandra Johnson, Baton Rouge customer, writes to thank John Gottschalck, inspector-contract crews, Baton Rouge, for taking "immediate action" on decaying, falling trees that threatened her property:

"...My family and I are very grateful and happy to be one of your customers. You are truly a professional and that results in good business."

A fan letter

"This is a fan letter," writes W. S. Bud Leonard, Lamar University, to Lewis Guthrie, general manager-engineering, Beaumont, regarding support for the Ben Rogers/Lamar University "I Have A Dream" scholarship program.

"As you know, Violet Dugas played a leadership role in securing a total of \$2,000 for a full scholarship...We are grateful for your support of this effort and Violet's dedication and hard work...Our sincere and heartfelt compliments and congratulations on a job well done to you, Violet, and your associates."

Dugas is senior engineering assistant in Beaumont.

Great extents

Mrs. J. Frank Kirkland, Baton Rouge customer, writes in appreciation to GSU employees for dedicated service:

"I read the pamphlet that came with my bill...I learned of the great extents the employees of GSU went to to keep our electricity flowing during that time of cold weather. I would like to commend and thank you all. May the good Lord bless you and all your families!"

Raising the banner

Melvin Clark, service foreman, Lafayette, recieved this thank you letter from the steering committee for the Acadiana High School Twenty Year Anniversary:

"The steering committee would like to thank you for your assistance in helping to make the Acadiana High School Twenty Year Anniversary Celebration such a tremendous success. We do appreciate the assistance you provided by hanging our banner across Highway 90...It is the generosity of people like you that helped to make this event a reality."

Excellent service

This letter was received by the Woodville office from David Williams:

"Here is the money I owe on my account. I want to thank you for your patience and the excellent service I had in the years I was with you."

Very cooperative

"I would like to extend my appreciation and thanks for the help I received from Jackie Spann, on the error in billing...on my account," writes Baton Rouge customer Steve Ball.

"She was very cooperative and thorough in her assistance correcting the problem."

Spann is a part-time clerk at Essen Lane, Baton Rouge.

Curb service

Leonville customer Tracey Guilbeau writes to Joel Jeffcote, superintendent-Lafayette, in appreciation for assistance from a GSU employee when her car quit running:

"I pulled over to the side of the road and one of your employees very kindly stopped to help me. He was a perfect gentleman.....He knew just what to do to get my car started and I was very grateful."

The helpful employee is Robert Paul, meter reader, Lafayette.

Going the extra mile

"On behalf of the staff at Cypress Park Apartments, we would like to thank you for all your assistance in getting our meters placed and utilities turned on this week," writes Tammie Partin, manager, Cypress Park Apartments, Baton Rouge, to Peggy Schilling, customer contact clerk, Essen Lane.

"We realize you had to have gone that extra mile and it does mean a great deal to us."

Caldwell shows appreciation

by Scott Harper

The city of Caldwell has a new industry thanks to the GSU Team City program. "The program did just what it is designed to do," says Paul Senkel, economic development agent, Conroe.

Members of the Caldwell marketing team benefited from Team City training by attracting ZIA Technology, a recycling business. Upon learning the company was considering locating a new

plant in Lufkin, marketing team members approached ZIA about moving to Caldwell.

"Thanks to the knowledge the marketing team received in training, they knew what information to provide to show how Caldwell was a good, profitable community to locate in," says Senkel.

As a result, ZIA officials visited the city, looked at the proposed site and decided to come to Caldwell.

"They are currently in construction," says Senkel.

At a recent community meeting, the city of Caldwell expressed its appreciation to Gulf States with a surprise. "The city manager, Bill Broaddus, presented us with a cake that read, 'Thank You GSU, You light up our life,' " says Senkel. "It was a very nice gesture."



Left to right, Broaddus presents Conley with the surprise cake.

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Kerry Zimmerman,
River Bend,
(504) 381-4298

Dudley Clarke,
Lake Charles Division,
(318) 433-8965

Sue Simon,
Port Arthur Division,
(409) 983-6651 x2291

Tommy Weeks,
Beaumont Division,
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Baton Rouge Division,
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